

FELLOW NEWS

NEWS FOR AND ABOUT THE COASTAL MANAGEMENT FELLOWS

ISSUE FOURTEEN

JULY 2002

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA) COASTAL SERVICES CENTER TO RELAY INFORMATION ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM AND PROVIDE A FORUM FOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE AMONG FELLOWS, MENTORS, SEA GRANT, AND THE CENTER.

FOCUS ON FELLOWS: RACHEL SMYK-NEWTON 1999-2001

The coastal environment has always been a part of Rachel Smyk-Newton's life. Although she grew up in upstate New York, every summer was spent with her grandparents on the beach in Rhode Island, where she developed an interest in the ocean, the shore, and all of the diverse creatures that live there.

As an undergraduate at Smith College in Massachusetts, Rachel studied public policy and marine science. She found that she really liked the interface between science and policy and saw the importance of policy makers having an understanding of the science involved in their decision-making processes. She put this concept into practice while enrolled in the environmental science and management program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where her group thesis project examined alternative uses for wetland property that had been filled to build a golf course. She and her team examined scientific, economic, and political factors to develop a matrix of alternatives depending on different stakeholder interests.

Because she felt that state government possessed the best decision authority, Rachel had always wanted to



Rachel Smyk-Newton, Coastal Management Fellow is currently with the Maryland Coastal Zone Management program.

work at the state level. When she ran across the Coastal Management Fellowship program on the Web, she saw a opportunity to fulfill that desire. Rachel applied and was placed with the Maryland Coastal Zone Management Program to work on a project entitled "Designing a Comprehensive and Regional Approach for Shore Erosion Control in the State of Maryland."

Concern over increased erosion and the possible effects of sea level rise (Maryland expects a higher than average rate of increase) led to the appointment of a task force to investigate the state of coastal erosion in Maryland. As a result of the recommendations made by the task force, Rachel was tasked with developing a comprehensive erosion control plan. Originally, the plan was to encompass all of Maryland's shores, but

due to lack of funding, the project has been limited to two counties that will be used as pilot areas.

At the heart of the plan is a geographic information system (GIS) tool that will help to identify regions in need of protection, as well as the types of protection that may be appropriate. Different indicators were used to develop four criteria for the model: the rate of erosion in a region; the environmental impacts due to erosion; the impacts of erosion on public and private infrastructure; and the region's vulnerability to sea level rise. Types of recommended protection include hard action, soft action, no action, land acquisition, and regulatory tools.

Rachel is currently wrapping up her fellowship and preparing draft shore protection strategies for the two counties. After she is gone, the state will continue to work with the counties to implement the strategies.

As for her post-fellowship plans, Rachel will not be moving very far. She has accepted a position with the Maryland Sea Grant Extension program as a coastal community specialist, where she will work with local communities on smart growth and economic issues. She hopes that she will be able to build on what she has already done in the state of Maryland and that her relationship with the Coastal Zone Management program will bring the two agencies closer together. ♦



FELLOW FLASHBACK: MELANIE COYNE 1998-2000

Carefree childhood summers spent at the family beach house on Cape Cod ultimately helped to guide Melanie Coyne's career path. Located on an eroding bluff, the beach house was the unfortunate victim of an ill-placed groin. Not understanding the dynamics behind what was happening, young Melanie and her family watched as the bluff shrunk from approximately 200 yards during her grandfather's childhood to within five feet of the house.



Melanie Coyne, former Coastal Management Fellow, says that her current projects at the California State Coastal Conservancy lead back to her fellowship.

By chance, Melanie, who had planned to be a fiction editor for a publishing house, took an undergraduate course in oceanography. She was fascinated to learn about the processes that were threatening her family home and decided to change her major from English to geology. Melanie, who

describes erosion as a very emotional topic given her family's experience, focused her graduate studies at the University of Hawaii on shoreline change analysis and erosion hazards on the island of Oahu.

Placed with the California Coastal Commission for the fellowship, Melanie's project involved creating a decision-support tool to objectively identify areas where beach nourishment might be suitable and a mechanism to prioritize the sites. After extensive research on the history of beach nourishment in California and consultation with a technical review committee that included engineers and project managers, she developed a model based on 13 criteria divided into four filters: technical, environmental, access, and logistical. The resulting model was an easy-to-use geographic information system (GIS) tool that will help California's coastal managers more efficiently distribute funds and resources for beach nourishment.

Melanie describes the fellowship as an amazing opportunity and especially feels fortunate to have been placed during the time that she was placed. During her fellowship, California was very much in a transition period and was really beginning to recognize the value of its beaches. New legislation and partnerships were being created, and Melanie found it very interesting to be a part of it.

One such partnership created during this time period was the California Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup (CSMW), which provides a forum for federal, state, and local stakeholders to coordinate activities to protect, enhance, and restore coastal

beaches and watersheds. As a consultant to the California State Coastal Conservancy, Melanie serves as a member of this workgroup, which is working to expand the management of sediment from a site-specific to a more regional approach. The group's goal is to identify regional sediment needs and opportunities, and provide this information to coastal managers, as well as the general public.

Another project that Melanie is actively involved in partners the conservancy with the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to map nearshore benthic habitats. A GIS will be created to provide a more clear understanding of the nearshore environment and resources that might be affected by future projects such as beach nourishment. This program also aims to provide a data clearinghouse to the general public. Their philosophy is to maintain a transparent government by making the public aware of what data are used in the decision-making process.

Melanie feels that all of her professional projects lead back to her fellowship. Aside from the technical skills and content knowledge that she gained as a fellow, she feels that she learned the most from her interactions with decision makers. She recommends to fellows that they not only focus on their defined projects, but that they also take advantage of all opportunities to learn, such as networking and workgroup participation. These opportunities, she says, "are the icing on the cake." ♦

For more information about the California Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup, visit www.spd.usace.army.mil/csmwonline/. Details about the Nearshore Habitat Inventory can be found at www.sandag.org/nearshore/.

FOCUS ON THE FELLOWSHIP: FIVE NEW FELLOWS CHOSEN

The seventh annual matching workshop for the Coastal Management Fellowship program was held in April in Charleston, South Carolina. Of the ten finalists, five were chosen as the newest class of fellows:

Ruby Pap, from the University of Michigan, will be working with the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission on a project entitled "Development of a Water Quality Monitoring Program for Marinas in the San Francisco Bay."

Susan Fox, from the University of Charleston, will be working with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Long Island Sound Programs, on a project entitled "Public Access to Coastal Environments (PACE)."

Tali Engoltz, from the University of Washington, will be working with the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources on a project entitled "Mitigation at the Local Level: Technical Assistance to Local Government for Mitigation Program Development."

Megan Tyrrell, from the University of New Hampshire, will be working with the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management on a project entitled "Marine Habitat Mapping Strategy."

Julia Knisel, from the University of Maine, will be working with the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Division of Coastal Management (DCM) on a project entitled

"GIS Based Evaluation of Inlet Process Impacts on Oceanfront Shorelines, Transportation Infrastructure and Other Development Activities."

The California Coastal Commission deferred placement of a fellow until next year for their project entitled "Development of a Predictive Tool for Coastal Bluff Erosion."

The new fellows will begin work on their projects in August 2002. For a description of their projects, visit the fellowship Web page:

www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/fellows.html. ♦

FOCUS ON THE CENTER: SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR MANAGING COASTAL RESOURCES

A newly developed comprehensive course is now being offered by the NOAA Coastal Services Center. *Survival Skills for Managing Coastal Resources* is designed for coastal resource professionals who know the resources but struggle with the people part of the equation. The course provides practical information and training in core competencies needed by coastal resource managers. Each topic includes Web-based, as well as traditional classroom, instruction. Course topics include the following:

- *Coastal Management Framework* addresses the different roles and responsibilities of coastal resource management individuals and organizations, and introduces coastal legislation.

- *Collaborative Processes* provides skills in designing and managing productive stakeholder meetings.
- *Information Survival Skills* teaches participants how to find, assess, and manage information.

Registration is now under way for this course, which will be held at the Center **August 19–22, 2002**. The cost is \$105.00. For more information, please contact Lynne Hinkey at Lynne.Hinkey@noaa.gov or (843) 740-1191.

Future classes will be offered by the

Center and are available by request. On-site training can also be arranged. Local hosts are responsible for workshop logistics and assuring participation of a minimum of 20 coastal professionals. The Center will provide instructors and materials. More detailed information about the course can be obtained by visiting

www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/cls/cmp.html. ♦

For information on other training opportunities at the Center, visit the Web site at www.csc.noaa.gov/training/.

*** Upcoming Events ***

JULY

22–26: National Marine Educators Association Annual Meeting

Location: New London, Connecticut

www.oceanology.org/SENEME/NMEA2002/nmea2002.html

AUGUST

18–22: 132nd Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society

Location: Baltimore, Maryland

www.fisheries.org/annual2002/

SEPTEMBER

15–18: American Shore and Beach Preservation Association Annual Conference

Location: Portland, Oregon

www.asbpa.org/2002conf.html

24–26: Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration Conference

Location: Baltimore, Maryland

www.potomac.org/pwp/conference.html

OCTOBER

7–9: Wetlands 2002: Restoring Impaired Wetlands and Other Waters

Location: Indianapolis, Indiana

www.core4.org/Core4/Wetlands/Wetlands2002.html

29–31: Oceans '02

Location: Biloxi, Mississippi

www.oceans2002.com/



Coastal Zone 03

B A L T I M O R E

July 13 - 17, 2003

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT THROUGH TIME

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Join us in Baltimore, Maryland for Coastal Zone 03 to explore coastal zone management through time. We'll revisit our coastal management history, look at where we are today, and decide where we are going.

Four themes will shape the discussions on our coastal management past, present, and future: port and harbor management; regional land management; management responses to coastal hazards; and management of aquatic resources.

You are invited to submit an abstract of 250 words or less for one or more of the many sessions planned for the conference. All abstracts must be submitted by **Monday, September 16, 2002**, via an on-line submission form. Submission guidelines and additional information about the conference can be found at www.csc.noaa.gov/cz2003/.



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